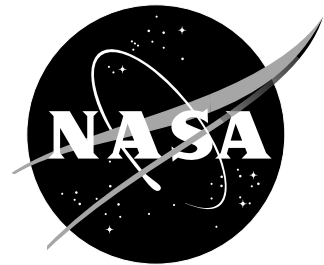


NewsRelease

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration

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For Release: August 24, 2001

RELEASE NO. 01-095

NASA Langley considers changes to strengthen center

NASA's Langley Research Center in Hampton is considering giving more work to private industry and strategically redeploying its civil service work force through retraining, reassignments, attrition and possibly employee buyouts.

The effort is in response to a Bush Administration directive intended to build a stronger, smaller government that is more responsive to the public. Langley's approach will have to be reviewed by NASA headquarters and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in Washington, D.C., before any action is taken.

The OMB directive ordered federal agencies including NASA field centers across the country to strategically assess their resources. Toward that end, the Center is examining its work force and facilities to ensure that each is poised to continue delivering revolutionary aerospace research.

"Over the past eight years, Langley Research Center has become significantly more efficient and effective," said NASA Langley Director Dr. Jeremiah F. Crendon. Operating costs have been cut by 40 percent; civil servant employees have been reduced from 2,900 to 2,396; underused facilities have been mothballed; and innovative partnerships have been formed with industry and academia.

"This Center has always obtained routine business services from the private sector," Crendon told employees at a forum held yesterday morning. "We will be looking for more opportunities to compete selected services."

While options for which services could best be performed by private sector contractors are being explored, no decisions have been made and none are anticipated until late fall. Options could include more contractor involvement in facility operations and research test article fabrication.

"This is an opportunity to rebalance our skill mix to better match the needs of the country," said Crendon.

According to the Bush Administration initiative, five years would be allowed to put into effect whatever plan is approved. Langley will propose phasing options to minimize the impact on employees.

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